

He is half my soul, as the poets say

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/26683291) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/26683291>.

Rating:	Not Rated
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Minecraft (Video Game) , Video Blogging RPF
Relationship:	Clay Dream/GeorgeNotFound (Video Blogging RPF)
Character:	Clay Dream (Video Blogging RPF) , GeorgeNotFound (Video Blogging RPF)
Additional Tags:	Angst with a Happy Ending , Hurt/Comfort , Denial of Feelings , Soulmates , 5 Times , 5+1 Things , technically? idk man i fucking winged it , Rushed , lots of tsoa quotes , Historical Inaccuracy , Historical References , no beta we die like men , pls excuse the mistakes:))
Language:	English
Series:	Part 2 of Dteam Prompt Week [september]
Collections:	MCYT , dsmp fics !!! , favourite dsmp fics :') , Fics I've cried to
Stats:	Published: 2020-09-27 Words: 9743

He is half my soul, as the poets say

by [Qekyo](#)

Summary

Day 4: Soulmates

George and Dream are soulmates, supposedly-- reborn to see if they'll find each other again, and again, and again.

(or the soulmate au that hurts, a homage to TSOA)

Notes

eyyyy, coming in clutch at 2 am amirite?

ALSO: this is a homage to Song of Achilles by Madeline Miller, most of the quotes are taken from her book, check it out!

WARNING; ALOT OF HISTORICAL INACCURACIES

this one was a bitch that's all. (also uli, fuck you if ur reading this [jk ily])

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

Dream doesn't believe in soulmates.

He's seven when he's heard the story that made him so.

His father would tell it to him by the hearth, kindling next to its warmth as he strung together the story of the first humans. He spoke vividly about the people who walked this earth first.

How they shared the same soul, heart, and body.

"No human can share the same body!"

His father would laugh, wise and old as he said, "But they were not human either."

They walked the earth, in constant adoration for each other. They trekked bare lands of the newly created world; having four hands and walked on four feet.

Their bodies were stitched together with loose string, mending their singular heartbeats as one. They lived in the company of each other, with every day spent filled with ever such joy and devotion for one another. They were so content in fact- that they didn't need the gods that had created them.

His father's tone would go grim when he talked about the gods.

His face would contort like one of a feral beast when he told him how the gods split the first humans in half. Severing their loose tied hearts, spreading them to the corners of the world so they may never find each other. How they laughed tyrannically, watching their creations cry out to them.

His father always spat the names of the gods in vain. Painting them as devils from the bellows of hades. And he made sure that Dream would feel the same.

Dream's father would look at him, eyes weary and tired.

His mother was a god,

And she had left his father.

"Son, I want you to remember this." His father would say, grasping his feeble shoulders tightly. His old, sunken eyes would look into his, and Dream could see the deep-rooted heartache behind them.

"You must *never* find your other half."

Dream would hear that every single night, for the next ten years of his life.

His father didn't believe in soulmates.

He had loved a god, and she even bore a child for him.

He thought that his soul was to be forever intertwined with hers. He thought that the child she had given him would be proof that their love could flourish despite their shortcomings. He thought that the creator could love its creation.

And the heartbreak he felt when she left him however was a different kind of pain. Not one of betrayal, but rather disappointment.

The goddess left his father with a broken heart, and a child made of that brokenness.

So Dream didn't believe in soulmates.

He was twelve when he met George by the river bank.

He had been playing with the other kids in the kingdom when he had accidentally strayed too far into the forest. The thick shrubs and tall pine trees had made it hard for him to find his way back. So, instead of wandering aimlessly through the woods, he decided it would be best if he just kept walking forward, in hopes of finding anyone who could help him.

Wandering deeper into the greenery, he found a small place by the clearing. He admired the surreal beauty of the tall trees above him, and the soft dewy grass beneath his sandals. He inhaled the faint scent of pine.

He could see onwards by the clearing, was a small steady stream of water that led to a river.

He suddenly remembered a lesson his father taught him once,

If you are ever lost, always follow the river and it will guide you back home.

So Dream sprinted towards the source, his feet quick and nimble. He was always the fastest runner, and the fastest swimmer, and the best fighter--

Now that he thought about it, he was the best in *everything* .

When he got to the bank, he was barely even out of breath. With soft pants escaping his nose, he strolled on over to the edge of the dirt. Peering over the river to see how long it traveled.

“Uh, hello?”

Dream whipped his head to the side, his feet digging into the wet mud below him and he jumped. His eyes frantic as he tried to scour for the source of the voice that called.

“Geez, don’t need to be so scared.” It snickered this time. Dream could feel his brow furrow as before turning around sharply to the left. And there he saw him.

By the other side of the bank was a boy, dressed in an eggshell white toga, like his, dangling his feet off the side of the ledge. In his hand was a makeshift fishing rod, fashioned out of a large branch and rope. He waved it around in the water below as he smiled at Dream playfully.

“Took you a while to notice.” He snickered, tugging the string of the rod upwards. “I was beginning to think you were blind.”

Dream’s face flushed red in embarrassment. He quickly ducked his head away, hoping the stranger didn’t see how his cheeks colored in shame. In an irritated, stern voice he asked the boy on the other side,

“Who are you?”

He couldn’t see the boy’s reaction, but by judging at the happy lilt in his tone, Dream guessed he was smiling.

“I’m George!” He said jovially. Dream craned his neck back towards him. *George* had a gap in between his front teeth, and it showed in the way he beamed so widely.

Dream gave a tentative smile. “I’m Dream.”

He watched as George’s eyes widened, his mouth left hanging slightly as he stared at Dream in awe.

“You’re the prince!” He exclaimed, accidentally dropping his fishing rod in the river. He quickly got up and yelled. “My rod!”

Dream, without thinking twice, jumped into the river.

He hopped down into the surprisingly shallow water. Being submerged waist down. He maneuvered his body towards the rod that floated adrift. Reaching out his hand, he grabbed it in one fellow swoop. Holding up victoriously like some sort of trophy to George. The other boy’s eyes widened.

“Your highness!” George cried, pulling up the hem of his toga and stepping into the water. Dream spat out a bit of the salty liquid, making a face while doing so. He looked to George, waist-deep in the river and waddling to him.

“Why did you do that!” He scolded, “I could’ve gotten it myself!”

Dream for some reason, couldn’t help the grin that crawled itself onto his face. He didn’t hold back the boisterous laugh that cascaded out of his lips.

“H-hey!” George stammered this time his cheeks were the one flushed bright red as he watched Dream’s giggling figure. He couldn’t help the rising laugh that bubbled in his throat. He released a loud, wheezing laugh. George stared at him in confusion, but slowly a smile began to form on his own face. Soon after he was laughing alongside Dream. Their chortles ring about the forest in disarrayed harmony.

Dream was bellowing over in laughter with this stranger in the middle of a river holding a fishing rod.

It’s almost like fate.

Once their booming laughter died down, and they managed to lift themselves back onto the dewy grass. Drying their legs and feet, George whined about having his toga stained from their impromptu swimming.

“I never knew the prince of the kingdom was such a dullard.” He mumbled under his breath, fussing with the stains on his clothes.

Dream turned to him, and with a playful grin he said; “You know I can have you executed for saying such a thing.”

George’s eyes flickered with fear. He instantly took a step backward from Dream.

“Woah--, it was a joke.” He stammered, holding his hands up in mock surrender. George’s breath wavered, his chest falling with a loud exhale.

He chuckled airily, “Not a very funny joke that’s what.”

Dream wheezed, it came as easy as he smiled. He rolled onto the dewy viridian grass beneath their feet with a content smile, the cooling breeze made his still damp legs shiver. George also joined him on the dirt and mud. The afternoon sun lightly caresses their faces with its warm rays, heating their bellies and dusting their skin ever so slightly.

They sat there, feet dipped to the water below with a quiet, content silence between them as the water filtered through their toes. Dream watched in interest as wiggling cod swam by the heels. They were too big for George’s measly makeshift fishing rod to catch.

“Hey, maybe I should teach you how to fish properly.”

George turned to him. First appalled, maybe because the prince of the kingdom was offering him a chance to fish with him. Or maybe it’s the fact that this stranger invited him in the first place.

Then he smiled, and it was as warm as the sunlight that hit their backs.

“I would like that.”

“*Prince Dream!*” Voices called out from the woods behind, echoing past the billowing pine trees. Dream shot up, the mud and dirt caking his fine garments and staining his supple skin. He turned to the forest, hearing the rustling of bushes pan through.

Dream turned to George with a sad smile. His heart ached to leave this place of sanctuary.

“I’ll be back.” He whispered breathlessly.

George beamed, “You better.”

And so, Dream ran back through the thick pine, the leaves and needles pricking at his skin as he ran. He was smiling when he got back to the palace guards whose faces bore scared looks at the

sight of his muddled clothes. He was smiling when he was ushered to his worry-worn father who scolded him for running away.

He was smiling ever since that day.

He was sixteen-- turning seventeen when he first kissed George.

This time they sheltered under the shade of a willow tree. As the summer sun blazed through the sky, they sought comfort under its shadow. The calming sound of birds chirping came ever so often, catching itself adrift to the breeze which carried it to their ears.

“Happy Birthday, George.” Dream breathed slowly as he leaned in next to him, their bodies slick with sweat from the sun above.

“I didn’t think you’d remember.” George laughed the same kind that he loved to hear when they were kids. “Normally you forget the most mundane of things.”

Dream scoffed, “Your birthday is no mundane day. It’s the day you were born.”

His giggles were washed by the strong breeze that wrung by them.

“The day I was born doesn’t uphold the same amount of value as yours,” he said wistfully.

Dream frowned. “How could I not be utterly joyed at the day the gods gave me you?”

Dream didn’t know what he was doing. For all his quick wit and sheer perseverance got him through, this was not one of them. No battle strategy or tutoring lesson could ever teach him about the ways of love. He must learn it for himself, must learn how it’s like to fall so deep into something to the point where coming back out seems pointless. He must learn what it is like, to offer a part of yourself to another person for them to hold close.

He wants to learn love.

And that first starts with George,

“You’re so stupid.”

George didn’t intend it to be rude, judging by the soft and tender tone in his voice. By then, their insults have become terms of endearment. At this point, Dream was just sinking deeper and deeper in.

The only way he would ever know of love is the way George smiles under the shade of the willow tree. How his laughs mix with birds chirping in the wind. His eyes sparkle with the flicker of a flame, the light of his world. The only way he will ever need to know of love.

He does not heed the warnings of his father. A man whose heart has been worn on his sleeve. The only way Dream would learn of heartbreak was from him, and his time from the goddess. It was his mistake, not Dream’s.

“Thank you for being born.” He would whisper softly near George’s ear. Grasping the small of his back as he caressed his cheek. Their noses would brush against each other ever so slightly, sharing the same breath.

George would laugh while melting into the touch, “The sun makes your freckles stand out.”

Dream’s palms rested on George, and now he could officially say he held the world.

“Happy birthday.” He whispered, leaning in to kiss George.

Sometimes, Dream would convince himself that soulmates and destiny do not exist. Sometimes, he would kiss George softly, lips tender against his own as he pours all he knows of love into it, and he is convinced he’s found both.

It's messy and probably has too much teeth involved in it. But it's a kiss he shared with George, and really that's all he could care about. He's letting down the walls that his father had built for him and letting George see all the messiness and unclean parts of him. He's scared at first, thinking that if he sees them, the love and bond he had grown with the boy would forever be gone. He's terrified.

George breaks apart first, panting quietly as he rests his forehead against Dream's. A lopsided smile bright as day on his face. He huffs a small laugh. And Dream knows by then that he has no reason to be scared anymore.

Dream is enthralled.

"I have something for you." He says while standing up abruptly and going behind the base of the tree. George sits there, confused until he comes back with a figure wrapped in silk and cloth.

"What's this?" George asks, pointing to the wrapped object. Dream doesn't respond, he just smiles excitedly while hurriedly gesturing to George to open his gift. George rolls his eyes, and with nimble fingers, he gently unwraps the silk bundled object.

Dream had gotten George a better fishing rod.

Dream is twenty-one when he holds a dying George in his arms.

"No--please. S-stay with me." Dream sobs, his throat is sore and throbbing from screaming.

He is kneeling in a barren field of flesh and bone. With the blood of the men, he murdered for his kingdom, staining his armor and clothes. There's a gashing wound on the side of his body, the scarlet liquid slowly trickling out of it. He can't even feel it, not when the only pain he can feel is the one by seeing George, lying bruised and broken in his palms.

He's on his knees, begging, it's something he doesn't do often, but for George.

“Don’t-- Don’t I can stop the bleeding--j-just stay awake!” He says hysterically, trying to apply pressure to the multiple cuts and slashes on George’s body. But the blood just keeps pouring, pooling into a crimson puddle on the dry soil beneath them.

“P-please.” He stammers, breath hitching. He can’t stop the barrage of tears that escape his eyes and cascade down his cheeks like waterfalls. “Stay awake! S-stay awake...”

George slowly cranes his head to the side. His usually sparkling brown eyes are devoid of color. He looks haggard, rightfully so.

He manages Dream, a small, weak smile.

“G-george.” Dream says hoarsely. He cups his face with a bloody, soiled hand.

“Dream,” He manages, before coughing into his fist. Dream scrambles to lift his back, he doesn’t want his lover to be in pain in what he could bitterly assume- the last moments of his life.

He refuses to accept that.

“George, George *please* just stay with me.” He croaks, he’s losing his voice from how much he’s crying. “Please don’t leave.”

George doesn’t say he’ll be staying, nor can he promise it. He wouldn’t want to bid Dream farewell with false promises. So, he stares into the foggy, viridian eyes of the man he holds so dearly. They look as bright as the day he first saw them, only the childlike wonder is now gone, and all he can see is a broken-shriveled man. Hardened and calloused by war and grief as he leans over his body.

He can feel the way Dream’s hands shake and tremble in his own. How his sobs rack his body and ripple through the ground. He cradles him close, hoping to steal the last bits of warmth he has left.

He tries to memorize each and every bit of him. His silk spun, long blonde hair that’s matted in soot and dried blood. His freckles, that have decreased from the harsh winter of the land. The heart-shaped birthmark on his shoulder, the one he used to kiss and sing praises of. He whispers words of comfort into his ear, they won’t lead anywhere yes, but may they give him solace in his time of mourning.

George has given all of the broken, unlikeable parts of himself to him, and he would give him more if he so asked.

With a pained breath and a soft whisper, he mutters for what may be the last time;

“My beloved, we will meet again someday.”

The hand on Dream’s cheek falls limp and falls onto the dry soil.

“George?”

The body in his arms doesn’t respond, the eyes he used to adore just stare at him lifelessly now.

“ *George* .” He gasps, he can’t breathe. The grime and smoke fill his lungs, with the scent of war are all that he can intake. George’s blood is still warm in his hands, seeping through the cracks and in-betweens of his fingers. He can’t believe it.

He doesn’t *want* to believe it.

He doesn’t want to believe that George is gone, that his body lays unmoving in his arms. That the blood on the ground isn’t his. He doesn’t want to believe that the gods just took away his other half and scattered his soul to hades. He doesn’t want to believe in soulmates, because if he does-- it’s like admitting George is actually dead.

They took him.

White blinding anger takes over him first. He is the son of a god, he will not be forsaken by mortal boundaries.

He screamed, with all the agony of a man with nothing left to live for. He screamed and the ocean

stirred, sea beds rocked from the force of his voice. Mountains halved and crumbled. The tides lowered and the ground shook with his anger. He screamed with such vigor- that the world around him fell apart to his feet.

He cried out to his mother, to the only god who he knows will answer.

He screams out her name with his gravelly voice, he doesn't care if it hurts. He doesn't care if his throat sears in pain and agony. He doesn't care if the gash in the side of his abdomen bleeds. He doesn't care if no one comes at all.

They have taken the only thing that matters to him.

He cries, calling her name to the smoke-filled sky. On his knees.

And she comes.

The heavens part for her entrance, and like sunlight she filters through the smoke in a blinding beam of light. Her steps are light as she walks atop the dead mounds of bodies with vague disgust contorting her divine features. A halo of luminescent light shines over her head, outlining her gentle features. She is beautiful, but Dream couldn't care less.

Dream looks at her, eyes filled with perilous anger as she stands over the pool of blood, angelically. A docile smile graces her face, not even caring about the boy laid limp in her son's arms.

"My child," She says daintily, "You called my name?"

She dares to smile, she dares to disgrace his fallen love.

"Bring him back." Dream chokes back tears, every word he says sets his throat on fire.

The look on her divine features was pitiful, as she stared at the boy of her own flesh and bone. "There is no way to bring him back."

He cursed at her, not even caring if she were to strike him down with divine intervention. He had no reason to live if George wasn't beside him. "You're a god, find a way to."

She smiled at him sadly, "I may be a god, but no one can come back from the dead."

He thinks back to the river bank. The warm sunlight hitting their feeble bodies as the water is washed by them. He thinks back to the boy whose teeth gap showed every time he smiled and the careless way he laughed. He thinks back to the willow tree, where he had his first kiss.

"Then I shall end myself."

For the first time, the goddess frowned. "My son you mustn't, the value of your life is so much more to the one of this boy."

Dream felt the anger rise in him, she had the audacity to undermine George.

"His life meant as much as mine, and more." He laughed bitterly, clutching the still-warm body in his hands desperately. As he choked out, tears returned to his eyes.

"Why am I here if he isn't?"

Dream had so selfishly believed that George was his soulmate. The other part of him tethered with loose string. He believed that he found his other half, even when the gods had separated them to the far ends of the earth. Now he laughs, he had found his soulmate. And the gods were not pleased, so they tied him to a place where Dream could not find him. They had tied him to the bottom of the earth, in the far reaches of hades where he can not tread.

They have torn the string that tied them. And he resented them for it.

He still had so many things he wanted to do with George. There were still so many conversations they have yet to have, so many places they yet to explore. He still needed to teach George how to fish, why hadn't he done that when the other man was still here? Why did Dream only remember all these things now that George was gone? All the possibilities of a life with George had been cruelly taken from him the moment his life ended.

And if he chooses to believe it, then he would go the rest of his life collecting days that will never

outweigh the ones he wishes he had back.

The goddess watched her only child, cling onto the body of a man with half the blood of his own. Sobbing and screaming as he yelled at her to do the impossible. It was almost pitiful.

“If that’s what you want, then I will not stop you.” Her angelic voice dipped lowly as she knelt onto the dirty soil below. “However, may I sway you to another path?”

Dream, with all the desperation of a dead man, asked, “What?”

Her face turned grim, “You cannot take another soul back from the dead, but it can be reformed into another.”

Dream looked at her quizzically. “What do you mean?”

“This man you hold dear may not be with you in this life no longer, but he can be in the next to come.”

Now he understood the weight of her words.

“I can go down to Hades, and ask for his soul to be sent to the Elysium. There he will be reborn.” She lifted her dainty hand to gently stroke George’s cheek, quick and soft like the flap of a butterfly’s wing. She turned to Dream, now both of them were kneeling on ruin and ash.

“I will assure you of your happy ending.”

Dream knew about the process of rebirth. “That means his memory would be wiped.”

“I can make an exception for you, my son.” The goddess says, “But for him? He will need to find his way to you.”

“And what if he doesn’t? What if I never see him even in the next life?” He blurts, filled with newfound hope and fear. He’s verging on hysteria, he’ll take any way to see George again. He’d storm through the Fields of Asphodel himself, and face death head-on if he had too. No life in

paradise was worth the lack of his lover.

His mother smiled at him.

“If you are truly soulmates, then you would find each other even through death.”

The soft, motherly look in her eyes was odd for Dream. For years he had grown up without it. You could never have a goddess and a mother at the same time, that’s just how it worked for them.

She was never there for the parts of his life where he needed her most, but she was here now. In the time where it was ending.

She lifted her dainty hand to cup his blood-stained cheek. It was warm.

“Rest now my child, you deserve it,” she whispered.

Blood oozed from the gash in his side, his and George’s mixing with each other. His eyelids felt heavy, and his body leaned awkwardly to the side. He felt his mother’s arms hold his forearms, as she gently glided him onto her lap. There he laid, holding George in his arms as he spent his last moments with her mother.

They were tragic. Their story had not yet found its end.

“I’ll see you soon, my love.”

Death had been cruel to them in this one.

T w o

It’s the year 48 B.C.E when Dream meets George again.

He's running through the long massive corridors, filled to the brim with scrolls and scripture. He can smell the smoke and ash from outside the tall walls of the library. They're being invaded by that dictator of Rome which Dream doesn't care to remember the name of at the moment.

His feet are nimble and quick, darting past the collapsing pillars that fall from above. He's always been a fast runner, though he never put his athletic ability much use when most of the time; he's seen hunched over a desk and reading the latest scroll. Dream isn't a fighter- he's a scholar, invited to learn in the largest, most knowledgeable place in the world.

What a waste he thinks- as he sprints past all the burning pieces of papyrus. All of the world's greatest wonders of the mind, destroyed by the selfish desires of one man.

"They're still in here! Get them!"

Voices ring across the library's long halls, echoing the screams of his fellow scholars.

Dream shivers, even though the burning heat. He's going to die and he knows it. He's incredibly self-aware of his inevitability.

Fuck Caesar, because of him, he won't be able to see George yet.

Tears prick his eyes as he runs deeper into the library, there is so much lost time he has left. He thought if maybe- he had all the knowledge in the world, that he could find George.

But it seems the gods just love to see his misery.

He can feel the fire lick his feet, as he darts past the falling pieces of flaming marble. The pillars around him collapse, blocking the exit in front of him. He's left trapped, stuck in a burning building with no clear exit holes insight.

"There's one last, in here!"

The voices get closer, and soon Dream knows his demise. Though he has two options, to burn with the blazing fires of the Alexandrian library, or to be killed by the hands of his perpetrators.

Weighing his options, they both don't seem either preferable.

So he stands there, the fire roaring around him as he awaits the face of his killers.

He hates it when he sees George run in.

Dream doesn't know what to feel.

His face is rugged, though it's the same one from centuries ago. His features are illuminated by the harsh, yellow light. From what he can tell, his hair is still the same dark brown, and his eyes are still the color of chestnut that he so vividly remembers. And from what he can tell, his voice still has the same squeaky- foreign lilt to it.

He's painted in the blood of innocents and drafted in the scent of smoke.

Dream can't even get to memorize the way he looks before a column falls in front of him.

"Leave him! It's not worth it." one of the soldiers behind George yell, more pillars fall behind him as the cries wrung out. George looks back behind hesitantly, his eyes glistening with fear as he looks towards Dream with something that can only be described as pity.

George is pitying him.

And honestly, so does Dream.

George's armor shines in the light of the flames, reflecting the fear in his eyes as he hears his fellow soldiers behind him call out his name.

Their eyes meet. And Dream knows for sure it's the man he's been in love since death.

Dream hopes- he prays to any god that may hear him, to make George remember him,

But of course, the gods never do. George looks at him with obvious pity before turning back from the burning fires of the Alexandrian library. His prayers fall onto deaf ears, as he watches the man he used to love, join back the men who have invaded his home.

The fires curl and lick at his legs. He tries to inhale, but all he can smell is the singing of countless pieces of knowledge and smog. He could die in this vicious fire-but it would be all more forgiving than having George be on the side of the enemy.

Maybe the gods granted him a kinder death in this life.

"I'm sorry," George whispers before running back into the flame.

Dream couldn't be more destroyed.

He looks upwards, there's a small crevice that leads to the outside where the smoke exits out of. He could climb up and escape, possibly live a longer life than what he originally planned out. Move on, build a family, and forget about George altogether.

"If you are truly soulmates, then you would find each other even through death."

Dream may be clinging on to the words of a hypocrite, but at least he has something to hang off on.

He promised- that he would travel to the far ends of the earth for George, and he intends to keep that.

He sits down, in the middle of a burning corridor with nothing but a broken heart and a slimmer of hope. He lets the fires slowly burn away, letting him become one of the remnants of this great city.

He wishes George, a long happy life without him.

As he intakes the smoke into his lungs and chokes.

Three

It's 1492 and Dream is about to be executed.

It really wasn't supposed to go like this- a simple heist really was all it was. A quick grab and stash from some posh nobleman while they visited the town center cross-legged. He wasn't supposed to end up shackled in some musty, old cell with his death day in weeks time. It really wasn't.

He scoffed, pulling at the chains which held him captive. It was his own idiocy that got him here really, he wasn't careful enough. The sound of the window breaking was enough to alert the owner of his presence. Now the next thing he knows, he is whisked away to a dungeon under the castle.

He lays his head down on the concrete, this life sucks. Born into poverty with nothing more than nimble hands and quick thinking to get him through it all. He had survived off nothing but sheer will- and now he was going to get executed for it.

He hadn't even met George yet.

That's until,

"Comfortable, prisoner?"

Dream looks over to his side, there at the outside of his corridor is George. Decked in the clothes of a fine imperial guard. A sword strapped to his hip as he leans against Dream's holding cell.

Dream swallows the lump in his throat.

"As comfortable as I can get." He scoffs, clinking the shackles that hold him together. He tries to make his words seem threatening, but it's George. Dream couldn't even yell at him if he wanted to.

He laughs, "I know you."

Dream's eyes widen, hope sparkling in them as he looks at George aghast. Could it be? He feels his heart jump to his throat. He clamors to try and find the right words to say. What could he say? There was nothing in the world to describe the feeling of finding someone you thought you long lost again. Dream was left speechless.

"Y-you do?" He sputtered, internally smacking himself for how vulnerable his voice sounded.

George nodded. "You're the notorious thief who goes and steals from noblemen." He states plainly.

Dream's heart drops back into his stomach. A wave of disappointment washes over him as he deflates back onto the concrete floor. He lets out a frustrated groan, the pain of bringing up his hopes only to have them smashed back down takes its toll.

"My men have been trying to hunt you down for years now." He says wistfully, "You're quite hard to catch."

Dream catches his gaze, this time, George's eyes are illuminated by any fire. Or lifeless and dull, stead they're just brown. Jaded and hollowed from his service to the king.

In this life, Dream is a convict and George is a guard.

Dream stays quiet- refusing to talk to George, or if that's really his name in this life. His eyes avert back to the floor. He refuses to meet George's blank gaze.

"I see how it is, quiet huh."

George sits down in front of the cell, cross-legged and stern. Dream spares him a glance.

"I don't want you to be executed."

Dream's head snaps towards him. His mouth is left hanging agape slightly, as he stares at George bewildered. George huffs a soft chuckle, pressing his crossed arms closed against his chest.

Dream considers why he's here. Why he would bother to see him on death's row. "And why's that?"

George picks at the crevices between the concrete with vague disinterest.

"You're a good man, you only steal from heinous wealth and then you give it to the less fortunate." He says while flicking a piece of grout away. "No good man deserves a death like yours."

Dream hums, admiring the irony of it all. "And what do you suppose I do?"

"Nothing much, we're under the rule of a tyrant so far." He says with a bitter laugh.

"Hm, if he heard you say that he'd execute you with me." Dream chuckles, and beside him, George lets out a genuine giggle. It brings a smile to his dirt-covered face.

"You know I can have you executed for saying such a thing."

He thinks back to the river bank. Maybe this George would be the one to heal his aching heart.

"He probably would keep it a secret will you?" George pulls a finger to his lips in a shushing motion. Dream laughs softly at it.

There's a mischievous glint in his eyes, "I don't make promises I can't keep for certain."

A flicker of a grin flashes on George's face. "Then make sure it's for certain."

He holds out his pinky, in the jail cell where Dream resided. He looks at him, first surprised, then slowly turning into a small smile.

“Pinky promises? Never knew the royal guard was such a child.” He snickers, a teasing lilt in his tone.

Georg-- the guard's face turns crimson, as he sputters for rebuttal. Dream just keeps laughing, doubling over in his chortles at the flushed look on the other man's face. His laughter echoes through the walls of the underground prison, his last moments of happiness dance through the corridors for everyone to hear.

Once his spout of hilarity finally dies down, he hooks his finger with the guard's.

He looks at Dream with mild amusement.

“I promise not to get your head chopped off, good sir.” He does a mock salute with his other hand. The guard rolls his eyes, saluting back.

“I'll try to pardon you,” George says, suddenly serious.

Dream hopes he does, he still needs to do so many things.

“Let's hope I live to see it.”

The guard visits every day from thereon.

He delivers him food, water, and sometimes stays after just to chat to him. The other guards don't bat an eye anymore. They've grown used to seeing their head guard commune with the prisoner in cell 14. They've learned that if you ever question said prisoner in question with the head guard around- then he would most likely make you do laps around the field. They've grown to be wary of the man in cell 14 who's got their head guard wrapped around his finger.

Most of the time, when you wander the halls of the dungeon, you'll hear laughter bounce from the walls. Now, you'll see the head guard walk out with a smile so big on his face it could reflect the sun. Now, whenever anyone else tries to talk to prisoner in cell 14, he'll either spit on you and just

stay quiet. To anyone else, the head guard is some sort of miracle worker. Being able to tame such a wild, uncontrollable beast like prisoner 14 is a feat by itself.

Sometimes, you'll hear the head guard in the king's courtroom. How he pleads with the monarch for prisoner 14's atonement. Every single time, he walks out with a sullen look on his face, as he ignores everyone around him and runs to the dungeons.

Everyone knows the head guard has some sort of bond with the prisoner in cell 14, but they don't question it.

Not until the day of execution.

He sits, the same position he was in when they first talked, both on the same level on the dirty concrete.

He looks at Dream, with a solemn expression, and Dream already knows what he's going to say.

"I couldn't grant you atonement." He hisses as if those words themselves hurt him.

Dream nods, he's accepted the inevitable forever ago. He's taken the moments where he knows he should be mourning his own life- and instead uses them to make George laugh, to make him giggle so loud that it attracts the attention of the other guards.

Dream nods, this is enough.

"I-I'm sorry." George stutters out. Dream thinks about how often he says that phrase. "That sick bastard of a ruler doesn't want to face the facts."

Dream hums, he finds the way George curses out the name of the king vaguely amusing.

George looks at him, agitated.

"Don't you care?" He mutters slowly. "You're going to die."

I know, he thinks to himself . But I got to see you again.

“I already knew, although, thank you.”

“What for?”

“Being here. With me, even if it's only now.” Dream whispers, afraid that if he says it any louder, George would hear the dread in it. He doesn't want to worry him any further.

George looks at him, with a look Dream cannot decipher. He bites his lip, and with a heavy sigh, he speaks with the softest of a whisper.

“I wish we had met sooner.”

Dream smiles, He has longed for these hands to be entwined with his, for his lips to be so passionately pressed against George's, for their bodies to be tangled up in this mess they call love, and for their souls to finally breathe in the same air.

“I wish we had too,”

There's something so ironic in their tragedy, that it causes such resentment within Dream.

This is enough,

Right?

The loud gong of the bell in the main central shocks them both. It's the signaling for Dream's execution, his final moments are being spent with George.

George looks at him, with the most broken expression, his eyes threaten to leak tears, and his lip trembles ever so slightly. Dream has the chance to actually say goodbye to him this time.

“No-- No I-I can get you out.” He sputters, clutching loose straws. “I can get you out of here I-I can--”

Dream silences him with a kiss from the bars of his cell. It does the job, and George goes quiet.

It’s nothing like their first kiss, it’s neither soft nor sweet. Rather raw, and all-consuming. He can feel George’s tears run down against his face. He feels the passion to stay, burn through. Dream thinks that it’s better than the last- but really, any kiss from George is one worth keeping for as long as he has left.

“There’s no need,”

The sound of guards shuffling echo through the hallway. Their weapons clink together as they approach closer and closer. Dream can almost taste death.

“Goodbye, George.”

The guards finally approach his cell, armed to the teeth with spears and shields. They most likely think Dream would resist. Dream smiles indignantly at it, he stands with no help and walks to the makeshift shield they had made- not to protect him, but rather the people around him.

As they begin to walk, George scampers behind, pushing through in a desperate attempt to get to Dream. There’s shouting, and yelling, but he persists. Clawing his way past his comrades as he reaches out to Dream’s fading figure.

“Don’t--”

Dream exits the door to the prison and has gone to face death once more.

This time he’s under a guillotine, and he thanks it for being sharp and quick this time.

He looks out to the crowd that gathered to watch his beheading. They look almost sorrowful, the children that he fed on street corners are there. Crying as they hold each other tightly. Dream can at least manage the weakest of smiles. He was there for at least someone before his demise.

His eyes catch the gaze of George, who stands behind his fellow legion with noticeable tear-stained cheeks.

The sides have switched for this one.

He sucks in his final breath, as the executioner winds the guillotine handle. George requested it to be as sharp as it can be apparently, not wanting him to die, a painful, blunt beheading.

He looks back to George, who mouths something;

“Goodbye.”

He may have been a wronged man in this one, barely scraping his morality off the floor, but George was there to at least question it. George was there, and this time he was the one to watch his world get shattered before his eyes.

Dream would know the pain, after all, the greatest grief is to be left on this earth when another is gone.

This is enoug--

It's not.

He lets out a silent curse to the sky, hoping his mother would descend upon him again. As he mutters his final goodbye.

The guillotine drops.

F o u r

The war of 1812 happens, and Dream and George never meet.

It's as simple as that, nothing more, nothing less.

He's running through trenches and dodging grenades, he has no time for love. His life hangs in the service for his country- it's hell on earth for Dream. If he had the chance, he would most definitely gather his collateral, and travel the world in hopes of finding George again.

But now is not the time, right now it's brimstone and bloodshed.

Sometimes, when he's resting in a large pothole with his battalion, he thinks sweetly to a life with the man his wayward heart longs for. He talks about him to his men, painting stories of a lover back home with honey-like eyes and soft auburn hair. They speak of memories on those nights, and Dream has lots to share.

Sometimes, when the heights peak and they walk home with half as many men. He thinks about him, he tells stories of their adventures- ancient Greece, the roman empire to the dark ages. His men would laugh and down a pint, he was known as one to weave such vivid tales. Always in such elicit detail.

He's a symbol of frayed hope for men with no future ahead of them. They always listen to his stories, grimacing at their always dark ends.

Dream wishes they didn't have sad endings.

On those days they trek through the burning sun, they sing songs to ignore the pain. Dream leads, with symphonies, sang by old Alexandrians. In an array of mismatched harmony- it's the closest to home he'll ever get.

And on that day Dream has to go back to war, and kills innocent people for the sake of a newfound democracy. Dream hates those days, immensely.

He especially hates the day where he shoots a British soldier in the head, one with honey-like eyes and hair of auburn.

Dream hates war, and the man he became of it.

Dream and George never met in that life.

F i v e

It's a fine evening in 1940, and George isn't with Dream in this life.

He's standing in some grandiose mansion. All around him are gorgeous women in lush, twinkling dresses, twirling and giggling daintily with men in polyester suits. It reeks of floral perfume and musky cologne- the scent of the powerful and wealthy.

He sips his flute of sparkling champagne, it is sickly sweet as he goes down his throat like acid. He tries not to gag it out, it would be an offense of courtesy to the *very* chivalrous host. His bowtie feels a bit too tight for comfort, every time he gulps down the saccharine liquid he feels it press against the fabric suffocatingly.

He's in pain, metaphorically and physically.

He's standoffish, preferring to lurk in the corners of the dance floor where no one can see him. He may be someone of high importance but that doesn't give him any excuse to socialize to those his caliber. Though he may come off as egotistical and proud, in reality, he's too scared to even enter the spotlight at all.

So he's very surprised when a woman in a sparkling silver dress and red-painted lips, glides over to him while calling his name.

"Sir Hudson! How lovely it is to see you here," Her voice is airy and light, a popular trend at the time if he can recall.

He manages a tight-lipped smile, as he gestures to her. "Hello, how may I help you?"

She giggles into her manicured hand, "Mr. Hudson, did you forget me? I'm Mrs. Eliyah Martin, I was the one who invited you to from convention!"

Dream represses the urge to roll his eyes. "Oh, I'm terribly sorry Ms. Martin. I'm not one to remember faces."

Mrs. Martin is the culmination of all things posh and gaudy. From her wispy, voluminous blonde hair. To the eye-catching gemstones, she wears on her neck and fingers. Her perfect white, straight white teeth perpetually scream *privilege*.

"Don't be daft Mr. Hudson! I suppose my face isn't all that memorable."

Dream's eyebrow twitches, she's basically fishing for compliments by this point.

But Dream is a dry pond. He won't be suspected of her woes.

"Hm, well you most definitely make an appearance tonight, Mrs. Martin." His tone is poison drenched in honey. Satisfaction pools in his stomach when he sees the slightest figment of a twitch on her face. He plans to completely demolish her.

She laughs, its forced and pained. "Oh Mr. Hudson, you humor me. Tell me, how are your company stocks?"

By now, it's just a fight between two, well-dressed hounds, ready to rip each other apart verbally.

“Splendid actually, our ports are flourishing ever since the trade ban was lifted.” He hums on the rim of his champagne flute. “And you Mrs. Martin? How is segregating your workers doing for your company?”

He relishes in the way her mouth twitches into a snarl. He silently cheers when he notices how her hands squeeze her flute to the point of breaking.

She hums a quaint tune, and Dream could have mistaken it for a death song.

“You truly are just like the rumors tell you to be, Mr. Hudson.” She barks,

“And what do those rumors entail, Mrs. Martin?” He bites back.

She smiles, teeth bared. “They say you're not one to converse with so- carelessly. Sharp suit, sharp tongue.”

Dream winces, rumors are a dangerous thing. And if he's hearing it right, Mrs. Martin's been hearing more degradation than praise. It's bad for his name.

“Well, I can assure you I am more to that.” He coaxes with the best, most charming smile he can muster.

The she-dog clad in jewels grinned at him wickedly. “Oh, how so?”

“Hm, I must say I am popular with the ladies.” He lied smoothly.

His insides twisted, he hated the fact he had to use this part of him. It felt so wrong and dirty, it didn't feel like *him*.

He's in the age where everything is advancing so fast, to the point where the only way you can catch up is to push people behind you. He hates it, he hates the costly suit, the extravagant mansion, the high-class life. He hates how fake and see-through he's become.

He's rotten to the core.

Mrs. Martin laughs, her hand sways dangerously close to the nape of Dream's neck. She's close enough so they're within breathing space. He tries not to gag at the scent of her excessive, peachy perfume.

"Really now?" she purrs.

Dream's cheeks hurt from the grinning. "If I may?"

He hates it-

"Darling?"

Both their heads whip back to the sound behind them.

There stands George, prim in a fitting dark suit and coat tail. Holding the same flute of champagne only with a somewhat disgruntled look.

"Honey!" Mrs. Martin cheers, flinging herself to George's side with a dazzling smile. She practically sinks into his hold, laughing airily as she clutched him like a hawk to its prey.

Dream couldn't be more disappointed.

"Ah, Mr. Hudson, it's great to see you here." He says courteously, but somewhere under his polite smile, Dream could hear the slightest under of annoyance. He reaches out his hand for Dream to shake.

George offered his hand to Dream, like he was some sort of stranger.

And Dream took it like he was.

“Good evening to you as well, Mr?”

“Martin.”

Oh.

Mrs. Martin gave a small giggle, snuggling herself deeper into George’s chest as she smiles wickedly at Dream. It makes his blood boil even hotter.

He’s jealous.

“Well Mr. Martin,” Dream chokes out. “Your wife was fine company.”

George smiles, it’s achingly tender and soft. He glances over to the woman clung tight to his side. He doesn’t even know she’s a leech. Dream can’t say it though, who was he to George Martin?

“Thank you, she’s a bit of a handful though.” He smirks, gesturing to Dream as if he is the joke. Dream forces a grin.

“ *Honey!* ” Mrs. Martin admonishes, hitting her husband’s chest lightly. George laughs, the kind of laugh that only posh rich people have. It’s not the laugh that Dream has been searching for. It’s not the same hiccupy giggling that he so fondly remembers. It’s not the type he can wax poetic about. It’s not *George* .

This is George Martin, husband to Eliyah Martin, not his George.

“You two are quite the pair.” He manages, he tries to hold back the tears that begin to well. “A match made in heaven.”

You’re not mine.

George smiles at him, then turns to his wife. Their matching rings glimmer in the light of the chandelier. The look of love in George’s eyes are oddly reminiscent. How he looks at her reminds

him of the willow tree. Of a time so far away that he could already see it fading from sight. Soon he will forget about these broken fragments of a life he once had, and pour his heart over the fresh wounds that scar his body.

His internalized chaos brings them peace.

They don't even bat an eye when he begins to walk away. They're too focused on each other to care about him, but really who was he to split up the happy couple?

He walks out to the front lawn of the luxurious mansion, where the moon shines on the potted lilacs and roses bushes. Where he is at peace in his solitude. Just like he's always been.

He takes out a large cigar from his coat pocket. Lighting it aflame, he sets it into his mouth and breathes in the nicotine. They say it'll kill him faster, but really that's what he wants.

He lets out a puff of smoke, and with it, the tears fall from his face.

George isn't his in this life.

What is our ending then?

There's no end, we just go from the start

It's the 21st century when Dream gives up.

He sits on his desk, in the house he bought after he moved out of his parents the moment he had enough money to buy it. In front of him is a screen, playing his favorite game's loading screen. Minecraft.

Things have been quieter ever since he gave up.

It's not necessarily a give up per se, he's just- stopped going out of his way to find George.

He's not exaggerating when he says he had traveled the far ends of what the world has to offer. He's not exaggerating when he says that he has spent a millennium in waiting. He is not exaggerating when he says that he's lived thousands of lives- just to see if George remembers.

To see if George will travel the world for him, to see if George was waiting.

"If you are truly soulmates, then you would find each other even through death."

There are days when Dream questions it, were they even soulmates?

Was there even some mythical string that tethered their hearts together? Was there even any semblance that their hearts were once one? How could he even be for certain, what if he was just chasing the lie of a neglectful mother, trying to redeem herself at her child's weakest moment?

When those questions get too loud for him, he decides to end his life,

And he's answered with waking up with the memory of his actions.

It's a cycle, and the only retribution he has is the sheer piece of hope in his heart- that the gods will be kinder to them in the next life.

They never are- but Dream keeps holding on.

He thinks he should've heeded his father's warning.

"You must never find your other half."

Maybe the words from his heartbroken, old man held more value to one of his mother's. He was always looking out for Dream, he never had any ill intent. He just wanted to make sure he didn't end up the same fate as him. Alone and waiting, with nothing more of a memory of what he had left behind.

He is made of memories.

Why does he wait?

Because the thoughts in Dream's head would whisper to him. I feel like living life just a little bit more, just a little bit more passionately than I have ever been able to before. Yes, he's the only human in the world who's worth the effort.

Dream has lived a thousand lives, worn a thousand faces, spoken to thousands of people, learned thousands of things, and died a thousand times again.

He has found a way to love George thousands of times over.

Maybe that's the problem.

He leans back into his chair. He sees that his online friends, Bad, Sapnap, and Georgenotfound are online.

George was always there, in the thousands of lives he has lived. In some way or another, he'll find a way to crawl back to Dream, haunt him.

He leans back into his gaming chair and whispers his last prayer to his mother. She's never responded, not ever since the first time he died. Sometimes Dream thinks, she died along with him back then.

He whispers a prayer.

“If you’re listening-” He pauses, thinking carefully of what he was about to say.

“If you’re listening, which I hope you are. Please, make it stop. I’m finally done.”

Maybe- for the last time he finally fucking hopes- that the gods will be kinder. He’s endured so much pain, so, so much. For once, will they see that he needs peace?

He hopes to arrive at his next death late, in love, and a little bit drunk.

“Maybe we’re not soulmates.”

There’s a quiet, lonely pause. All he can hear are the cars outside pass by every so often. His house is too big for one person, it cannot house just one, desolate soul. There’s this comfort in his acceptance, for years he had been in denial. Afraid that if he finally took in the truth- he would be giving up his hope. It took him several thousands of years to realize it too. That giving up meant that he would finally stop having to wait for someone who might never come.

His was no fair-weather heart, but it was built to outlast storms.

Somewhere - far across the ocean, a woman with a halo of light and smile as soft wet grass near a riverbank. Let out a long, prolonged sigh.

Dream felt it, in his bones. Something ancient awoken within him. Like light spilling out of a golden urn, it stirred something in his heart.

On the side of his desk, his phone began to vibrate.

With a groan, he turned over to the side and reached for it. Absentmindedly, he swiped the ‘*answer call*’ icon and pressed it firmly against his ear.

“Hello?”

Across the line, a faint laugh arose. Dream's eyes widened in interest when he recognized it. That laughter was the question he spent most of his eternal life trying to answer. It instantly brought a smile to his face.

“You promised you'd teach me how to fish, is the offer still available?”

Dream doesn't believe in soulmates, because they aren't real.

You don't have pre-destined lovers from the start, it's who you choose to love.

And he chooses George, over and over.

End Notes

ok yeah, sorry about that :)))

couple of things

-sporadic updates

-upcoming secret santa

-i love bury your gays :))

-this was actually fun ngl

-thank u for reading! comment and kudos bc I need validation! i love hearing ur thoughts (so many historical inaccuracies)

-hhh dnf singers? next week yall, have this

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